

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAM-01 SSM-03 /062 W

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P R 041032Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4058

INFO /AMEMBASSY CAIRO 697

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBSSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6170

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY ON DEPARTING FOR
CAIRO ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING.

1. SUMMARY: BEFORE DEPARTING FOR CAIRO ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING, GOT FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY GAVE BRIEF AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED PROBLEMS FACING ARAB WORLD AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PARTICIPANTS COULD WORK TOGETHER TOWARD REACHING SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. CHATTY EXPLAINED THAT PRINCIPAL TAKS FACING FOREIGN MINSTERS WERE "EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING AN ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE ON LEBANESE PROBLEM, AS WELL AS PREPARING FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ARAB LEAGUE UNDER TUNISIA'S PRE-SIDENCY." CHATTY CHARACTERIZED THESE TWO MEETINGS AS BEING OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE IN VIEW OF TWO GRAVE DANGERS FACING ARAB WORLD NOW, I.E. THREAT OF LIQUIDATION OF PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION, AND THREAT OF PARTITION OF LEBANON WHICH WOULD BE CATASTROPHE FOR ARAB WORLD WITHOUT PRECEDENT SINCE CREATION OF ISRAEL. CHATTY FOLLOWED THAT IF PRESENT SITUATION IS ALLOWED TO
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CONTINUE, PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE WILL BE SO WEAKENED THAT IT

WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION. DIFFERENCES EXISTING BETWEEN "CERTAIN ARAB COUNTRIES" DO NOT FACILITATE FOREIGN MINISTERS' TASK, AND HE EXPRESSED HOPE THESE DIFFERENCES COULD BE RESOLVED IN GREATER INTERESTS OF ARAB PEOPLE, SO THAT ATTENTION COULD BE GIVEN TO THE REAL PROBLEM WHICH IS ISRAEL. CHARRY ADDED THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS MUST EXAMINE REASONS WHICH HAVE IMPEDED APPLICATION OF RESOLUTIONS ON LEBANON WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL IN PART MEETINGS.

COMMENT:

CHATTY'S STATEMENTS WERE PRETTY MUCH STANDARD FARE. OVER RECENT MONTHS GOT HAS CONTINUED TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER FATE OF TOCMNON AND OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, BUT HAS AVOIDED TAKING PUBLIC STAND ON INTRA-ARAB DISPUTE WHICH HAS ARISEN. ON PAST OCCASIONS GOT SPOKESMAN HAVE DESCRIBED CURRENT LEBANESE CRISES AS RESULT OF ISRAELI PLOT, AND WE NOTE CHATTY REFRAINED FROM SUCH GENERALIZATIONS WHILE UNDERLINING ADVANTAGES WHICH ISRAEL COULD GAIN FROM WEAKENING OF PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION AND OF EVENTUAL LEBANESE PARTITION.

ON EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE FOR CAIRO CHATTY TOLD AMBASSADOR HE EXPECTED CAIRO MEETINGS TO GO ON FOR TEN DAYS. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OUTCOME AND DEFINITELY FELT AN ARAB SUMMIT WAS NOT IN THE CARDS AT THIS "MAUVAISE CONJONCTURE." NEVERTHELESS, HE THOUGHT SOME EFFORTS HAVE TO BE MADE TO PUT THE ARABS' HOUSE IN ORDER AND MOVE TOWARDS ENDING THE PRESENT DISARRAY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TUNIS06170
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760336-0485
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760988/aaaacxyv.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY ON DEPARTING FOR CAIRO ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING.
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, TS, (CHATTI, HABIB)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006